UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

## University of Toronto Wind Symphony

Pratik Gandhi, *conductor*

Saturday, October 19, 2024 at 7:30 pm | Tribute Communities Recital Hall, 83 York Blvd

**"AIRS AND DANCES" – CONCERT PROGRAM**

Terpsichorean Dances

Jodie Blackshaw (b. 1971)

From Chaos to the Birth of a Dancing Star

Allan Gordon Bell (b. 1953)

Three Folk Song Settings for Band

Andrew Boysen, Jr. (b. 1968)

I. Poor Wayfaring Stranger
II. All the Pretty Little Horses
III. Scarborough Fair

Intermission

Keepers of the House

Conni Ellisor (b. 1953)

I. Atmospheric – Majestic – Quicker
II. Andante, but with liberty – Jig tempo

Round Dance

John Weinzweig (1913–2006)
arr. Howard Cable

Courtly Airs and Dances

Ron Nelson (1929–2023)

I. Intrada
II. Basse danse (France)
III. Pavane (England)
IV. Saltarello (Italy)
V. Sarabande (Spain)
VI. Allemande (Germany)

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*We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.*

As part of the Faculty's commitment to improving Indigenous inclusion, we call upon all members of our community to start/continue their personal journeys towards understanding and acknowledging Indigenous peoples' histories, truths and cultures. Visit indigenous.utoronto.ca to learn more.

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## PROGRAM NOTES

### Terpsichorean Dances

Australian composer Jodie Blackshaw is an important voice in the global wind band community. Besides having written many wonderful pieces for band, she maintains a list of band works by female composers from around the world, and she also started ColourFULL Music, an initiative which curates full programs, at various grade levels, of music by composers from under-represented groups. Blackshaw's *Terpsichorean Dances* is an imaginative arrangement of three tunes from Michael Praetorius' 17th-century collection of French courtly dances: after an original fanfare, you will hear "Springtanz" (Leaping Dance), "Der Lautenspieler" (The Lute Player), and "Der Schutzenkönig" (The Archer King). The composer uses a kaleidoscope of colour combinations from across the band and challenges the musicians with meticulous indications of style.

### From Chaos to the Birth of a Dancing Star

This composition was the result of a collaboration between composer Allan Gordon Bell and the students of Salisbury Composite High School, just outside Edmonton. Together with Bell, the SCHS Wind Ensemble came up with the concept and main melodic ideas, exploring different ways of making sounds to depict the chaos that begins the piece—these include key clicks and repeating different figures or sets of notes as fast as possible, or at the player's discretion. The title comes partly from the students and partly from a quote by Nietzche about the nature of creativity: "You must still have chaos within you to give birth to a dancing star."

### Three Folk Song Settings for Band

The three songs that composer Andrew Boysen, Jr. selected for this triptych share a common melodic shape, including an identical intervallic relationship in their first three pitches. Boysen expands on these to create a row of eight notes which he uses in various guises throughout the three movements. The figure is first heard in its entirety as an accompaniment in "Poor Wayfaring Stranger" which then recurs in "All the Pretty Horses" and in a modified form in "Scarborough Fair". But fragments of it, particularly those first three pitches, are littered throughout the work, and Boysen even stacks the pitches together to form cluster chords in the finale. Though the three folk songs are not otherwise related, this motivic integration across the movements provides the piece with a tight sense of cohesion and unity.

### Keepers of the House

Dr. Suzanne Simard is a professor at the University of British Columbia and a leading scholar in the field of forest ecology. Her research with the Mother Tree Project highlights the interconnectedness of forest life through a shared network between plants and fungi, colloquially known as the "wood wide web". The comparison to our own internet is not hollow, either, as the network facilitates sharing of information via chemical or electrical signals, in addition to essential nutrients. More importantly, Simard's research brings into scholarship and builds upon knowledge that Indigenous peoples have carried for generations, and the Mother Tree Project works in collaboration with several First Nations in the forests of Western Canada. Simard's book *Finding the Mother Tree* inspired composer Conni Ellisor to write this work, *Keepers of the House*, in 2021. Ellisor calls the ancient Douglas fir trees, some of them many centuries old, "the silent watchers, the guardians of our lives", and expresses her hope that the piece can help to broaden our awareness of our connection to all life on earth.

**Round Dance**
John Weinzweig was both an alumnus of and a long-time professor at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music. Fondly remembered as the "Dean of Canadian Composers", he was also a highly respected educator, whose students include Murray Adaskin, Harry Freedman, and Marjan Mozetich. *Round Dance* was written in 1950 for the studio orchestra of a radio show hosted by Murray Adaskin's younger brother John, and was later adapted for band by another of Weinzweig's students, Howard Cable. The work's title is perhaps misleading, considering how "square" most of the music sounds; the "round" here refers instead to the many canonic entries of the theme, especially towards the end.

**Courtly Airs and Dances**
Like Blackshaw, Ron Nelson drew upon three Renaissance dances for his *Courtly Airs and Dances*, in this case from the 16th-century French composer Claude Gervaise. The dances "La volonté" (basse danse), "Pavane d'Angleterre", and "Fanfare Allemande" provide the musical material for four of the movements, including the opening "Intrada", and Nelson created original melodies in the styles of Italian and Spanish dances to round out the suite. Also like Blackshaw, Nelson deftly balances an expression of the characteristic qualities of each dance with an innovative approach to orchestration and colour.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

**Pratik Gandhi** (he/him) is an award-winning freelance conductor and researcher based in Toronto. He is a sessional lecturer at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music, where he directs the Wind Symphony. He is also music director of the Rouge River Winds and the Milton Philharmonic Orchestra, and was the founding music director of Soup Can Theatre. In addition to regularly guest conducting and adjudicating bands and orchestras, Pratik is active in several organizations that support music educators, most notably the Ontario Band Association. Since 2017, he has also served as Vice-Chair of the Concert Band Division of MusicFest Canada. Pratik is currently a doctoral student at York University, where his research, supported in part by an Ontario Graduate Scholarship, investigates issues of equity and representation among wind band composers in Canada. Pratik received a B.Mus. in music education and an M.Mus. in conducting from the University of Western Ontario, where he studied conducting with Colleen Richardson, Jerome Summers, and James McKay, and percussion with Jill Ball.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO WIND SYMPHONY**
Pratik Gandhi, *conductor*

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Naomi Anne Lobo
Kathleen Murphy
Elaine Wang
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